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klären? Man ist gezwungen sich zu beschränken und vieles gehen zu lassen. Es ist furchtbar bequem gegen bloss Gedächtnisarbit zu predigen, und gewiss wird das Gedächtnis noch in vielen Schulen, hier in dem, da in jenem Fache, gemissbraucht. Aber welche Idee haben Kinder z. B. von irgend grössern Dimensionen und Zahlen? Wie viele Dinge hat ein zehnjähriger Junge denn in grösserer Anzahl als hundert zusammen gesehen, derart dass er sie zählen und sich überzeugen konnte? Dabei rechnet er womöglich in Hunderttausenden. Zur Vermeidung überflüssigen Auswendiglernens hat Schopenhauer den bemerkenswerten Vorschlag gemacht, man solle von kompetenten Leuten alle zehn Jahre den stets wachsenden Memorierstoff sichten lassen, damit er in keinem Fache ein unschädliches Mass übersteige.

(Fortsetzung folgt.)

### Gustav Frenssen—A Study.

(Für die Pädagogischen Monatshefte.)

Von Dr. Warren W. Florer, University of Michigan

The men who, but a few months ago, were maintaining that contemporary German literature was too corrupt and uncertain to bring forth lasting fruit have been aroused by what seems to them the sudden appearance of an unexpected poet, from an unexpected place and from an unexpected profession. But Gustav Frenssen, the Pastor Poet of Hemme, came in the fulness of time, when the minds of the German people had been prepared by years of a secret social revolution. Legion have been the underlying forces which have shaped this development; modern commerce; modern social conditions; modern philosophy; modern literature; modern development of the individual; modern conception of religion. The tooth of time has been gnawing at the old, and the old has been stubbornly struggling in the inevitable war of the survival of the fittest. The "paper walls" behind which the old retreat when attacked, are the established government, the established religion with set etiquette, laws and morality. Its weapons are dogma; its armor an assumed authority of divine inspiration. The best example in the field of literature is the forbidding of Heyse's powerful moral drama "Mary of Magdala" (which has been weakened in the adaptation to the American stage) by the police of Berlin. However, one sees the opposite extremes in the excesses of the new. And it is well in this chaos of transition, that the old is beginning to assert its tempering influence.

Who is Gustav Frenssen? The average teacher might say. "Gustav Frenssen was born in the year 1862 at Barlt. His parents were god-fearing industrious people. He has inherited the stern integrity of his father and the deep religious nature of his mother." The Low German will rejoice over the fact that Frenssen comes from the same indomitable

race as Reuter and Bismarck, Storm and Hebbel. And the individuality of the man might be overlooked.

The mere date of Frenssen's birth means but little shorn of its environment. In other words Frenssen was born at a time when conditions around him were beginning to grow and develop and ripen along with his growth and development and ripening, and so influenced him from his very childhood and prepared him for the day when he could assume leadership. This correlation of individuality and Zeitgeist rests upon observation trained by experience.

Frenssen's education might be given as schools of his native town, Gymnasien, Universities of Tübingen, Berlin and Kiel, had he not indirectly revealed it to us; practical occupation, expanseless fields of universal life's-wisdom, independent reflection, acquaintanceship with life, entering upon unexplored fields and endeavoring to rise as well as possible, plus the great objective factor — "nothing educates a man more than to observe the lot of fellowmen".

At the Gymnasium he observed so much that when a Primaner he wrote an essay of which the conservative teacher said: "You never wrote that essay; it was written by a man fifty years of age, not by a youth of eighteen". And this youth entered the universities and continued his observations. Some of these observations are to be found in his writings. Among other things he observed that many a lad obedient to the strong will of his parents is compelled to finish the Gymnasium and the University, although he has no inclination for or capability of such an education. He also observed the opposite when at home. Many a lad with talents and craving for an education is forced to remain a mere laborer by the obstinacy of the parent.

When at Berlin Frenssen apparently passed the Literaturecafes, the breeding places of that literature which has a slovenly and ugly form, and which gives a man no more capability than that of an animal. The world seems to it to be a tenementhouse. He, however, was diligently preparing himself for his chosen field of labor.

Frenssen's chosen field of labor was, evidently, determined not so much by feelings of homesickness, not so much by the desire to be in the neighborhood of the sea with all its invisible influences, but because he knew the secret wishes and the burning needs of the people, whom he had been observing since his very childhood. The study of the past and present history of this people emphasized the possibilities of the people. For a few years he worked in his still quiet way, cheered by the helping hand of a virtuous woman (this is often referred to in his writings). His father always full of hope, his mother introspective, bashfully modest and inclined to borrow trouble. The worry brought upon him by the reception and misinterpretation of his sermons is also evident in his writings.

The step of literary activity is best explained by his own words to Theodor Rehtwisch: "Believe me we have many grand and capable men among the country pastors who could fulfil entirely different tasks than are assigned to them. Such a manifold inner life generally becomes resigned. The children, if there are any, receive the best of it. For it is certain that a moral wealth without comporison has been carried out into life from the evangelic parsonages by sons and daughters who enter different fields of activity. What a list of great names comes from the parsonages, but the people do not know it this way. Believe me, it is awful to think that one must waste one's life, when forces which are struggling towards light, are slumbering within one. I do not know what would have happened if this talent had not worked itself free. What a liberation it is to me that outside of my little parish I have a large growing parish, to which I am allowed to give my best."

Frenssen's literary activity began in 1895 with sketches and novelettes for a Berlin illustrated magazine. Then followed the "*S and-gräfin*", "*Die drei Getreuen*" and "*Jörn Uhl*". In addition to these he has published a collection of sermons. A potent activity, if one estimates by content and not by pages. Furthermore, it is not the number of books which gives a poet a literary position, but the influence of his writings. It is true that the poet was not recognized at first, but this is the lot of nearly all great men. It was not until the criticism of Karl Busse in "*Tag*" that the German people awakened to the fact that a real German poet had been silently working among them. And since that time the writings of Frenssen have entered nearly every educated and many a common home. What does this tremendous demand mean? The Germans are not in the habit of reading the novels of the day. It means that the material presented corresponds to the needs of the people, these needs springing from a secret development within the lone sanctuaries of their hearts, and from forces which have been slumbering, but struggling for expression. The German people understand these books, because they have an appreciative feeling for the people. And in literature, as well as in government, the people crave to be controlled by their own. They understand these books because they have experienced them.

Again, these books have been written with a high moral purpose notwithstanding the tradition that art must not have a purpose. In "*Die drei Getreuen*" one finds: "Whoever wishes to write must first of all be a genuine man, humble before his divinity, proud in the face of the world. I wish to edify myself with what I read. It must elevate me. It must make me stronger against every sin and more courageous against every destiny". Heim Heiderieter also says: "You must write something worth writing; something earnest, that one can grasp with both hands

without breaking: Of sin, of sorrow, of Heimat and of Fatherland, of true love and of upright work. Something real German and simple as Reuter and Freytag have written, something for the entire German people, something which the educated loves to read and also the common man."

With this purpose and with the equipment at which I have merely hinted Frenssen created his epic trilogy. Of the "*Sandgräfin*" I will give only the author's preface: "The Heimat is marshland, fertile as a hot-bed and as flat as a slate. History has not written much about it, and the people pass over it as an overgrown child would. The boy who grew up in this Heimat possessed a restless fancy, but no opportunity to satisfy it. He sought a land, manifold in its forms, beautiful in its changes, and did not find it. An hour distant toward the west was the sea, the ever turbulent. In the east the firm land ascended abruptly. This bore villages and hills, meadow and forest in variegated blending. Thither flew the hungry soul. The boy saw the men wandering over the waste sea and the desolate heath, men who had experienced great deeds and bitter privations. — When he began to become a man he wrote this his first book".

"Since that time he has made a great step forward in the development. He has learned to go more slowly and to see more clearly. But whenever he will look into this book again, he will not regret what he has written. He will rejoice that he has written it with such good cheer, and will wonder that he had then seen so much and so extensively."

"He will continue to wonder as long as he lives. The 'nil admirari' he will always leave to others."

The transition from the "*Sandgräfin*", which smells at times of old library books, to "*Die drei Getreuen*" is on the surface abrupt. However, if one reads between the lines and follows the then visible threads the transition will appear natural and simple. The author frees himself from the learned studies of past history and enters upon the study of the human beings around him. He is at home among them. The objective insight into the life about him enabled Frenssen to picture the passions of his countrymen. He has fulfilled what Theodore Stroom with the same material failed to grasp on account of his extreme subjectivity. It remained for Frenssen to be the first epic novelist of his native country Schleswig-Holstein.

The space is too limited to give any adequate conception of this typical German book, rich in material, perhaps not exactly unified, according to the dogma of art, but all the more natural. We obtain a beautiful picture of his country and of the influences of nature, especially of the sea. The life manner of thinking and customs of the people are unrolled before our very eyes. The short and simple annals of the poor

affect us. We see the influences of the Franco-Prussian war and the reconstruction period upon this people. The scenes where man and woman are brought together are beautiful. — Heyse mentioned this in a letter to Frenssen. (Rehtwisch). We catch the underlying currents of the social disturbances, the needs and hopes of the people, the crying need being land. And to us Americans the book gives an insight into some of the causes of that large migration to our country and also into the hopes and sorrows of the men and women who have decided to cast their lot among us. Most touching is the parting scene with the singing of the *Reiselied* and the simple powerful farewell sermon of the old pastor. The author adds: "If a stranger had been in the church, he would have been able to have said exactly: 'Thus have these people lived. Such has been their work, such is their love and such their hope'."

The poet's epic power is especially seen in the development of the lives of "*Die drei Getreuen*" and in the mastery of the final solution. The refrain of the epic is contained in the song of the night-watchman which ends each book:

"De Klock hett veer slahn,  
Veer hett de Klock.  
Der Tag vertreibt die finstere Nacht,  
Ihr lieben Christen, seid munter und wacht,  
Und lobet Gott den Herrn."

Especially interesting is the development of the poet Heim Heide-rieter, the character which reflects Frenssen himself. The book in this connection teems with literary references. The following conversation of books illustrates Frenssen's keen sarcasm:

An old thick three volume Danish history said to its triplet sister: "I do not feel at home here. The man who is studying us is unworthy, he is not learned".

"He is an enthusiast and a dreamer."

The insulted moon reflected a yellow light.

"And often he stares past us."

"Yes" the sister answered, "it is sad. For twenty long years we have stood unused in the stackrooms of the state-library; and now, since we have finally come to life again they send us to this unlearned man."

"Do you recall the Professor at whose house we were twenty years ago?"

"Yes, he was a different man".

"He wrote a very learned work, do you know it still" (the sister shook her head). "He occupied himself very diligently with me, more so than with you. He hemmed and hawed and puffed himself up and was very learned and excited. He was so excited that he occasionally wrote words in my margin. I did not get vexed at him either".

"What did he write?"

The leaves rustled lightly.

"What can it be? I only understand Danish. Something respectful, you may depend upon that. See, there it stands".

There stood scrawled with a hard leadpencil

"Ignorantia Pyramidalis".

"And here?"

The short word "Blech".

"What does that mean?"

"It is a recognition of my authority. I am proud of the fact that I am a learned book, the first born of us three. Who knows the olden times as well as I?"

The moon endeavored to glide along the window-sill. It yawned and was disgusted with the continuous flood of books and wished for a passing cloud to cover it up. Then another book began to speak with a still suppressed voice.

"It certainly is not nice of him to lay such an old and heavy book as I am upon my stomach, but I will tell you something, I, the chronicle of the Priest Helmold von Bosau, am glad that I finally got out of the hands of the professors and stackrooms, and have fallen into proper hands and into the proper house. I am a fine book. I am so fine that I must be read between the lines, for my truth and my reality lie far back of my letters. Who reads you, must have learning, who reads me must have heart and faith, he must be a poet".

Frenssen's first great plan, evidently, was to write an historical novel, but the study of the past in books was overshadowed by his occupation with the people around him. And the past was absorbed by the present. In "*Die drei Getreuen*" we find a conversation bearing on this presumption: "Do listen Heim, perhaps you could take material from the past of your Heimat" — "Hm, an historical novel" — "Well, yes" — "Dont want to read one, much less to write one".

Frenssen's attention went from the people to the individual. And the next step was the development of an individual within his environments. He wrote "*Jörn Uhl*". Jörn Uhl's life is summed up in a conversation between Jörn and his friend Heim Heiderieter at the close of the book. Heim Heiderieter said:

"You have experienced a hard life, Jörn, I would like to know what you think about it."

"Do you wish to write the history of my life, Heim? It certainly is not the right material".

"Your life, Jörn Uhl, is not a minor human life. You have had a still boyhood, adorned with variegated pictures. You have been lonely when you were growing up and have courageously struggled without

assistance with the problems of life. And however little you may have been able to have divined; the struggle has not been in vain. You have marched to the front for the land which surrounds this spring, you have been hardened in fire and frost, and have made progress in the most essential of all, namely, to discriminate the values of things. You have experienced woman's warm love, the second highest which life can give. You have placed Lena Tarn and father and brothers in the coffin. In those hours you looked human trouble in the very eye and have become humble. You have struggled, with hard hostile destiny and have not succumbed. You have freed yourself, although it lasted long before assistance arrived. You, with set teeth and high courage, have worked yourself into science, at an age, when many are thinking of retiring. And although surveying has been your work and joy for years, you have not become onesided. You are interested in the country which lies beyond your chains. You are also interested in the books which your friend Heim Heidrieter writes. What is one to relate Jörn, if such life is not worthy of relating."

The moral of this reminds one of the moral of the story of "Frau Sorge": A man's life experience can not be given him. Another cannot live a life for him. He must have experienced life, and he can not begin to live until he has freed himself. And he must act of his own free will and accord. The fundamental idea of "Frau Sorge" and "Jörn Uhl" which are alike in many respects and which have "die Sorge" as the basis of the work, is that, "although sorrow has blighted the youth of many excellent and capable young men and women, the opportune moment of victorious decision can rescue".

The first woman in Hemme who read "Jörn Uhl" was the wife of a farmer. She said: "The book is pretty good, but how any one can pay money for it, I can not understand". And then a clergyman of high position in Hamburg read it. After he had read the first few pages he condescendingly expressed himself as being satisfied with it. "But afterwards<sup>1)</sup> well afterwards when I describe that which I must describe, he is said to have remarked: "We must exert revivalistic influence upon our Brother."

We are thus led to Freyssen's interpretation of religion, as this is the most vital element of the book, and accordingly the principal reason of its increasing influence Freyssen recognizes that religion and nature are not two separate things: "you certainly are not of the opinion that religion is from God and nature from the Devil, but both are from God, and shall dwell together in perfect harmony, rendering one another mutual assistance." He thus believes that the Seele and the Körper are

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<sup>1)</sup> I quote Freyssen through Rehtwisch.



inseparable. This is in direct contrast to Luther's opinions (see "von der Freiheit eines Christenmenschen"). He recognizes that religion is one thing and dogma another; that religion is one thing and the mere history of religion another, that the development of religion correlates with the development of the individual. And thus it is natural that the development of Jörn Uhl's religion centres about his individual development. In short we see in Jörn Uhl the development of a Christian man within the newer conception of christianity — the real freedom of a Christian man. Such a man, as Frenssen thinks, the "Man of Galilee" would wish.  
(To be continued.)

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## Zur gesetzgebenden Grammatik.

(Für die Pädagogischen Monatshefte.)

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Von Dr. Edwin C. Roedder, Assistant Professor of German Philology, University of Wisconsin.

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Die rein wissenschaftliche Sprachbetrachtung, „der es nur darauf ankommt, ihren Gegenstand zu begreifen.“<sup>1)</sup> ist im wesentlichen die unvergleichliche Schöpfung und das Hauptverdienst Jakob Grimms, mithin noch keine hundert Jahre alt. Was Grimm vorfand, war, abgesehen von Ansätzen zur wirklichen Sprachforschung in den Arbeiten seiner bedeutendsten Vorgänger, lediglich Sprachbeschreibung, im besten Falle eine zuverlässige Darstellung der zu einer bestimmten Zeit nebeneinander vorkommenden sprachlichen Formen und Erscheinungen. Diese ältere Sprachbehandlung verfolgte aber auch keine wissenschaftlichen, sondern praktische Zwecke. Ein Blick auf die Geschichte der systematischen Beschäftigung mit der Sprache wird dies erklärlich erscheinen lassen. Bei den Griechen, denen wir diese systematische Sprachbehandlung verdanken, und deren Schöpfung das ganze Gerüste und Fachwerk unserer Grammatik, ihre ganze Terminologie und Methode <sup>2)</sup> ist, hat die Sprachbetrachtung nie eine selbständige Stellung eingenommen; einerseits diente sie der Schriftstellerauslegung; anderseits lag es ihr ob, den richtigen Gebrauch der Sprache zu lehren und zu erhalten. Auch das Mittelalter, dem die Hauptergebnisse der Griechen durch römische Rhetoriker vermittelt wurden, brachte in der Sprachbetrachtung keinen Fortschritt. Ebenso wenig ging dem Humanismus ein Licht über das geschichtliche Werden und das eigentliche Wesen der Sprache auf; eher noch könnte man für diese Zeit von einem tatsächlichen Rückschritt sprechen. Frisch und fröhlich hatte sich das mittelalterliche Latein in mehr als tausendjährigem Gebrauch immer weiter von dem Muster der goldenen Latinität entfernt; das lag im Wesen der Sache, und wenn Cicero und Cäsar hundertmal die Hände über dem Kopfe zusammengeschlagen hätten. Mit völliger Verkennung aller Gesetze der Sprachentwicklung aber erweckte der Humanismus das ciceronianische

1) Steinthal, Geschichte der Sprachwissenschaft bei den Griechen und Römern, Berlin 1863, S. 709.

2) Steinthal, ebenda; und Ries, Was ist Syntax? Marburg 1894, S. 7.